

REMARKS

Claims 1-15 were previously pending in this application. Claims 3-15 have been allowed.

Independent claim 1 has been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 2 has been amended. No new matter has been added and support for the amendment can be found throughout the specification and claims, as originally filed.

No new claims have been added.

As a result, claims 2-15 are pending.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Independent claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the teaching of Maitland in U.S. Patent No. 5,985,155 (hereinafter Maitland) in view of the teachings of Allen, et al. in U.S. Patent No. 5,422,014 (Allen, et al.) and Schroeder, et al. in U.S. Patent No. 6,535,795 (Schroeder, et al.).

Applicant respectfully disagrees that independent claim 1 would have been obvious over the teaching of Maitland in combination with the teachings of Allen, et al. and Schroeder, et al. Nonetheless, to facilitate prosecution of this application, Applicant has canceled claim 1, without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, the rejection of independent claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been rendered moot.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Allowable Subject Matter

Dependent claim 2 has been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim (claim 1), but was deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including the subject matter of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Dependent claim 2 has been rewritten in independent form, including the subject matter of independent claim 1. Thus, the objection to claim 2 has been traversed. Applicant notes that

amended claim 2 would have been patentable over the teachings of the prior art for the limitations recited therein as well as for at least the reasons recited in the Office Action.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of claim 2.

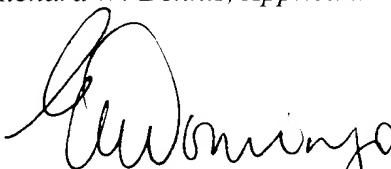
Claims 3-15 have been allowed. These claims are also patentable over the teachings of the prior art for the limitations recited therein as well as for at least the reasons recited in the Office Action.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50/0214.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard W. Dennis, Applicant

By: 
Peter C. Lando, Reg. No. 34,654
Elias Doming, Reg. No. 52,827
LOWRIE, LANDO & ANASTASI, LLP
One Main Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142
United States of America
Telephone: 617-395-7000
Facsimile: 617-395-7070

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